When you and your child are traveling abroad, you want the experience to be fun, educational, and disease free.

**Talk to Your Pediatrician Before Your Trip**

A good starting point is right in your pediatrician’s office many weeks before your trip.

- Review your child’s immunizations with your doctor.
- Make sure your child has received the **recommended immunizations necessary for their age**.
  - These include vaccinations for diphtheria-tetanus-acellular pertussis (DTaP), measles-mumps-rubella (MMR), chickenpox (varicella), hepatitis B, polio, Haemophilus influenzae type B, meningococcal and pneumococcal infections, and the flu.
  - Immunizations against diseases such as polio, for example, are especially important when your family travels internationally. Even though the number of countries where travelers face a risk of getting polio is small, outbreaks do occur, and it’s important for your child to be fully immunized and protected.

**Other (Non-Routine) Immunizations May Be Needed**

In addition to the routine vaccines, your child may need others as well. This will depend on the parts of the world to which you’re traveling and the activities in which you and your child will be participating.

Other immunizations, including those providing protection against yellow fever, typhoid fever, meningococcal disease, rabies, and Japanese encephalitis, may be recommended for certain destinations.

Here are some examples:

- Meningococcal vaccine is recommended for travelers to areas of Africa.
- Rabies vaccines may make sense for children who will be traveling to areas such as developing countries where they could meet rabid dogs and other animals. These vaccines are particularly
important when going to parts of the world where it could be difficult to quickly obtain rabies immunizations and medical care if needed.

- Yellow fever may be found in parts of South America and Africa. Some countries require the yellow fever vaccine before allowing travelers to enter. Keep in mind, however, that your pediatrician may not have the vaccine available in the office, so plan ahead. Certain vaccines are usually given only at places chosen by state health agencies.

- The typhoid vaccine is recommended for children and other travelers who could be exposed to contaminated food or water.

- A flu shot may be given to a child traveling abroad, depending on issues such as the youngster’s current health and chances of being exposed to the flu. Flu season is different in the southern hemisphere than it is in the United States.

For other immunizations, such as the MMR vaccine, talk to your pediatrician about the advisability of accelerating the vaccination schedule if your young child hasn’t yet been immunized. The first MMR vaccine, usually given at or after 12 months of age, can be given earlier (between 6 and 11 months of age) in children traveling to places where the risk for measles is higher. Before 6 months of age, an infant is protected by antibodies passed from her mother.

You can obtain up-to-date travel health information and advice from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov/travel) or by calling a toll-free phone number, 877/394-8747. When traveling, it is a good idea to bring an up-to-date record of your child’s vaccinations. This record will be useful when entering a country that asks for proof of immunization against certain infectious diseases.

**Other Travelers’ Diseases**

There are no immunizations for some of the diseases that may be found in other countries.

**There are some steps you can take to protect your child:**

Travelers' diarrhea is the most common illness affecting international tourists. It occurs most often in developing countries in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Carefully choose foods and drinks for your child to prevent diarrhea.

- Do not eat anything from street vendors and stay away from food prepared and served in unclean conditions.

- Also avoid raw or undercooked meat, as well as raw fruit and vegetables.

- Your child should only drink water that comes from treated sources. Safe drinks include bottled carbonated water and water boiled or treated with chlorine or iodine.

Preventing mosquito bites can lower the risk of getting certain infections, including malaria and dengue fever.
• Have your child wear long-sleeved cotton shirts and long pants. Apply insect repellent containing DEET (diethyltoluamide) to bare skin. It should be put on lightly and washed off once the child comes inside.

• Use bed nets and window screens for added protection.

• If preventive medicine has been prescribed for malaria, make sure it is taken as directed.